

SAFETY ALERT



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Metal Obstructions Lead to Hand Injuries



Figure 1. Reenactment of closing the ball valve from incident #1. The Metal tag obstruction is shown near the back of the hand.



Figure 2. Metal band outlined near the TMC connector that caused laceration to IP in incident #2.

Recently reported hand injuries underscore the existing hazard of metal obstructions and hand placement. According to operator's reports:

- An operator needed to close a ball valve when testing the LSH on the deck drain sump. As the operator gripped the valve handle with his right hand, the edge of a metal tag became lodged between the back of his hand and the bridle. As he forced the valve handle down and towards the vessel, the tag cut the back of his hand. The injured person was not wearing protective gloves at the time of the incident (fig.1).

- As an operator was loosening a connector on a transmitter with channel lock pliers (fig.2), his right ring finger contacted the sharp end of a metal band used to secure metal tags in place on piping. This resulted in a laceration that required several sutures. Although he was wearing protective gloves at the time, they were not sufficient to prevent the injury.

Therefore, BSEE recommends that operators and contractors consider the following:

- Ensure that offshore personnel always wear appropriate hand protection and other appropriate PPE for the job task being performed. It is recommended that hand protection is always worn in work areas.
- Maintain supplies of spare PPE at your facilities. Inspect all PPE and replace inadequate PPE before starting work.
- Regularly verify that all valve handles can function properly and without any obstruction that may cause injury.
- Continuously look for sharp edges or protrusions during regular hazard hunts. File down or cover sharp edges when possible or mark them to increase their visibility.
- Ensure that all JSAs identify the risks involved with hand placement/safety and specify the PPE required for the job. Consider metal obstructions or nameplates as a line item on JSAs.
- Include hand protection as a topic in the scheduled Health Safety and Environment (HSE) discussions and share lessons learned.

A **Safety Alert** is a tool used by BSEE to inform the offshore oil and gas industry of the circumstances surrounding a potential safety issue. It also contains recommendations that could assist avoiding potential incidents on the Outer Continental Shelf.